

# CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

*A Christian Journal of Opinion*

## Implications of the Elections

There are three items of salient importance in the recent election returns: (1) the largest Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress since the days of the New Deal; (2) the turning of the Democratic tide by Nelson Rockefeller's large Republican majority in New York; (3) the rejection of the right-to-work amendments in all but one of the states in which they were presented as constitutional amendments through referenda. All of these items throw light on the political history of our nation in the last quarter of a century.

The large democratic majorities in the Congress prove that the Democratic Party is still the majority party in the country and that the two overwhelming Eisenhower victories were largely due to the personal prestige of a national hero and the charm of a human being who is, incidentally, not a very successful politician. The results may also prove that the Eisenhower mystique is wearing thin. The recession at home, the continued tensions abroad, the failure of the President to maintain those rigorous standards by which he promised to clean up the "mess in Washington" and the continued deficits in the budget all proved that we were facing more perennial problems, internally and externally, than Eisenhower seemed to believe. But above all the election proved that the nation is committed to the social and political standards that Roosevelt initiated more than two decades ago. Only an Eisenhower with his new Republicanism could have won those elections, and even he could not save his party from defeat.

The Rockefeller victory in New York is not an exception to this generalization but a proof of it. For young Rockefeller is, if anything, more "liberal" than Eisenhower. (Incidentally, what does

this word "liberal" really mean, if not acceptance of the social and political standards that make a highly technical civilization sufferable?) One wonders how many independent voters voted for Rockefeller because they thought he would be a live option against Nixon. We hope their calculations prove correct.

Many voted against a good governor because the New York City boss, Carmine De Sapio, made the mistake of publicly humiliating the Governor in the senatorial nomination of Hogan, whom Harriman opposed. A "boss" is sufferable only if he keeps behind the scenes. Our guess is that De Sapio in violating this rule has numbered his days as boss even though he was one of those new liberal bosses who chose candidates who could win elections on their own appeal. De Sapio was a comparatively clean boss and the issue of corruption was not raised. It was not the love of pelf but the pride of power that proved to be his nemesis.

The defeat of the right-to-work proposals proves that American people have rightly reconciled themselves to the fact that the just management of an industrial society requires two subordinate sovereignties—management and labor. This would have outraged the purer liberal individualists of the past century. The fact that "big labor" can be as corrupt as "big business," or more corrupt, and had proved itself to be so in the Teamster case, does not alter the fact that stable unionism is recognized by the general public and by wise management as a necessary instrument of justice and of stable industrial relations.

Right-to-work proposals are usually introduced by reactionary business men and are designed to catch the votes of individualistic farmers and small

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business men. Big business does not usually support them. Poor Senator Knowland was not bright enough to understand this bit of American social history. He came right out for the right-to-work amendment in California. Labor organized a tremendous outpouring at the polls. Having voted against the amendment, the voter also voted against the Senator.

A note of irony was added to this concatenation of circumstances by the fact that an amendment designed to tax parochial schools brought out all the Roman Catholic voters, who also presumably voted against Knowland—these “reactionary” Catholics do know the facts about modern collectivist society. So the Senator was snowed under in the most humiliating defeat of the election.

But even a marvelously “just” democratic process is never completely just. For Knowland dragged down to defeat with him the man he had displaced on the ticket for governor and who had fought him on this crucial issue—Governor Knight. Knight is not exactly a democratic hero or martyr, but something ought to be done to console him with a booby prize.

R. N.

## MINISTERS IN THE SOUTH

THE CAREFUL STUDY of the role of ministers in Little Rock by Professors Pettigrew and Campbell (“Vignettes of Little Rock,” Sept. 29 issue) and the letters that we published in the last issue may create a one-sided impression of the total effect of the ministry in the South. Ministers in the South are of many kinds but, as a group, they seem to some observers to do better at each stage. The action of the Washburn Presbytery that aroused the wrath of Governor Faubus (see “The Communist Menace—1958 Model,” Oct. 13) is one example of this. The ministers in Virginia have long had a remarkable record. The corporate statement of the ministers in Atlanta a year ago was also a splendid witness. The picture varies from community to community, however, and the testimony of Dr. Martin Luther King about the silence of most of the white ministers in Montgomery is disappointing.

A recent poll by *Pulpit Digest* shows that four out of five ministers in the southern states favor compliance with the Supreme Court decision. This points to one rock-bottom fact: that the ministers in the churches of the South generally know that segregation is religiously and morally indefensi-

ble. There are many shades of difference in the way in which they relate their conviction about this to their actions. No outsider can judge what should be done in each local situation where the pressures are strong, though it is well for the insider to realize that rationalizations for caution and silence are legion. Sometimes ecclesiastical leaders could be far more helpful than they are to men who are facing fierce local pressures.

On balance we must say that the ministers are a great resource in the states where the problem is most acute. The fact that there is such a general difference between ministers and laymen is a major problem for the Church's own life.

J. C. B.

## WHEN CHRISTMAS BECOMES DIVISIVE

THE OBSERVANCE of Christmas in the public schools is becoming a more divisive issue each year. It is ironic that Christmas should itself be the source of considerable bitterness in American communities. In community after community, especially in suburbs, conflicts have developed in recent years. Communities that have always been religiously homogeneous enough to accept these Christian celebrations without question find that they now include a growing Jewish minority. As the Jewish group becomes larger, someone raises the issue and asks that a familiar practice be stopped. It may be the giving of a nativity play by the school, or the use of a crèche on school property or the singing of distinctively religious Christmas carols in classes or school assemblies.

Responsible Jewish leaders often do not raise the issue and are reluctant to have it raised by others; but once it is raised, a conflict develops in which the Jewish community as a whole becomes involved. Many Jewish parents feel that the presentation in the school of a play that has Christological implications is religiously confusing, if not harmful, to their children. Also, since children tend to be conformist, it is embarrassing for them to refuse to participate in such activities.

Serious conflicts may develop between opponents of these observances and the school authorities, or between school authorities who have decided to abandon traditional practices and groups that protest against the new policy. In one New York suburb in 1957, after the school board had decided that a nativity play should not be presented, one thousand parents came to a meeting to protest

against this action. Some of them organized a "Citizens Guardian League" committed to the re-establishment of such Christmas observances. Under such circumstances the Jews are accused of being enemies of Christianity and latent anti-Semitism is expressed in the name of Christianity and of Christmas.

We can expect this type of conflict to become more frequent as the suburbs come more and more to reflect this type of inter-faith situation. We write about this matter now because churches need to give it careful attention lest a local crisis develop before any preparation has been made to deal with it. This issue is not isolated; it illustrates the much broader problem created by our religious pluralism in communities that have been accustomed to think of themselves as Christian or even as Protestant communities.

It is no solution to decide that schools in all communities should drop all observances of Christmas that retain an element of Christian meaning. It is not enough to say that Christmas is no longer a Christian holiday, that it is a festival of Western culture or a commercialized festival and that the school should observe these common secularized aspects of Christmas in complete separation from its Christian context. To do that is to teach something about Christmas that is not true. The least that can be expected is that there be in the school program some explanation of what Christmas means to Christians.

How can this be done without implying sectarian beliefs? That is part of a larger problem of how the facts, symbols and convictions of religion can be taught without indoctrination. The difficulties of doing this should not prevent schools from attempting it. If there are communities in which there is so much religious animosity that it cannot be done, such situations must be endured but not made normative.

It is also no solution to provide for a double celebration of Christmas and Hanukkah because the Jews do not regard Hanukkah as a very important occasion; to equate it with Christmas is to teach something that is untrue about it both to Jews and to Christians.

The following considerations are offered to stimulate discussion on this issue. The issue is important in itself and it is similar to many other problems that appear in our inter-faith situation.

(1) The problem should not be neglected so that ill-feelings increase because of the indifference of the Christian majority.

(2) No one solution is applicable to all com-

munities. It would be a mistake to inhibit all spontaneous observances of Christmas everywhere because in some communities there is serious objection to them.

(3) This is not a Church-State issue as much as it is an issue involving the relation between the state and religion and even more the relation between the community and religion. It would be unfortunate if the issue became primarily a matter for the courts.

(4) The teaching about the facts, symbols and convictions associated with Christmas as a Christian holiday should be included in the program of the school wherever possible, and provision should be made for similar teaching at other times about Jewish holidays.

(5) An honest attempt should be made to distinguish between this kind of teaching in the form of dramatic presentations and corporate worship. Many other distinctions will have to be made. One school board on Long Island has made distinctions between what is appropriate in classrooms and what is appropriate in assemblies, between what is sung by a choral group and what is sung by the school as a whole. Aspects of Christmas that are a universal part of the culture—Christmas trees, exchange of gifts, etc.—are appropriate in the school program.

What is most to be desired is a sensitive effort to find some adjustment in each community. Both majorities and minorities should realize that there is no perfect solution and they should not expect one. They should recognize that they cannot demand an uncontrolled sectarian observance of Christmas, or a completely empty space in place of Christmas, or representations of Christmas as a secular holiday.

J. C. B.

#### As You Know . . .

Christmas shopping in the market place is fun—for the first fifteen minutes. Women armed with iron wills and pointed umbrellas can even take it for a full day. But why don't you relax, uncup your fountain pen, and transfer your shopping list to the enclosed order blank. Then send it to us, and we'll take over.

This year, for \$3, you can send your friends a year's subscription to *Christianity and Crisis* plus a copy of *What the Christian Hopes for in Society*. If you're renewing gift subscriptions sent last year, we will substitute *The World Crisis and American Responsibility*, a new collection of essays by Reinhold Niebuhr, edited by Ernest W. Lefever.

Let us help you avoid the Christmas rush entirely; send in your gift subscriptions now.



## Lessons from De Gaulle's France

KENNETH W. THOMPSON

POST-ELECTION AMERICA shows signs of having more in common with the America of 1932 than of 1952. Its experience with a President who prefers to reign rather than to rule has left it hungering for more active and vigorous leaders. Voters whose actions are not always unequivocal seemed to speak to this issue with one voice on November 4. They cast votes of no confidence for those under whom the country seemed likely to stand still.

This event reminds us of the place that strong and vigorous leadership plays in any democracy. It suggests that France's problems in reconciling liberty and order is also an American problem. French political life since May has been largely a drama of the attempts of Frenchmen to meet urgent national and international problems through strong executive leadership while preserving republican institutions. These six months of de Gaulle's leadership doubtless contain certain object lessons for American political life.

Judgments of the Fifth Republic and of de Gaulle as its personification, whether by Frenchmen or non-Frenchmen, are of course premature. Bewilderingly confused and contradictory realities continue in Gaullist France. Last spring observers wondered whether this awkward, proud, alternately ambiguous and decisive figure was the savior or the gravedigger of republican institutions. They asked whether the army, which since Napoleon had not initiated a seizure of power, was now marching toward dictatorship. Some went so far as to ask whether he was the Kerensky of French fascism, but others recalled that he was the hope of Bourguiba and those who sought a liberal solution in Algeria.

However confused and uncertain the French scene may be, three lessons emerge from the first months of de Gaulle's leadership. First, he plainly views his mission as the expression of essential French national interest. Beyond particular interests and divergent values he seeks to synthesize common interests. It is tempting for those caught up in subnational programs like housing, labor reforms or industrial expansion to scoff at this vision. Indeed, the General's mission was simpler and less complicated on June 18, 1940 when he rallied Frenchmen in war and liberation. Yet when states deny the possibility of general interests, they run the risk of placing parochial aims above those of all the people. The lesson of his stress on na-

tional purpose is the stubborn requirement within the states for more than local values.

Secondly, dynamic and aggressive leadership within a republican system, to preserve its popular legitimacy, must create, maintain and act within a constitutional framework. French "democrats" like André Philip warn that Gaullism could easily move in the direction of "an authoritarian and technocratic socialism." Philip writes: "The risk is that he will group around him the efficient but authoritarian experts and top administrators and then use the resources of modern propaganda to make the masses ratify decisions taken by the knowledgeable few." The best guarantee against this is a constitutional order. The General has been increasingly preoccupied to reach this, sometimes to the dismay of his critics.

Paradoxically, liberal democrats warn on the one hand that authoritarianism lurks in the cult of personality freed of constitutional limits that surround the General. On the other hand, they see his concern with judicial and constitutional definition as an excuse for avoidance of urgent economic reforms. It is said that de Gaulle became absorbed in legal subtleties at the expense of social reform once before in postwar France. With France's crushing fiscal and economic problems, the General's overarching legalism could prove fateful.

Yet drafting a constitution for the Fifth Republic is scarcely an inconsequential task. The first goal is to strengthen the authority of French governments. The French presidency, which M. Herriot once exclaimed had fallen in importance to little more than clerk and postman, seems destined to become the responsible head of government. Under the new Constitution, the President holds powers of dissolution of parliament, is negotiator of treaties and is the source of virtually all authority in emergencies. Beyond that he selects the Prime Minister, who by comparison pales into insignificance. The Prime Minister and parliament retain legislative powers in areas like fundamental liberties, taxation and the penal system. In all other spheres the Government or, in effect, the President will make the laws and control the parliamentary timetable within the Assembly.

The drafters plainly have had in mind freeing the Government from continuous harrassment so that constructive policies may be possible. Yet if the threat was inaction (*immobilisme*) under the Fourth Republic, military dictatorship is feared

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under the Fifth Republic. One observer notes: "It is a curious thing that many Frenchmen who saw the Constitution of the Fourth Republic as a weapon against the possible dictatorial ambitions of General de Gaulle, now see this Constitution (as it stands at present) as a weapon that only General de Gaulle could be trusted to use in order to prevent dictatorship." However, de Gaulle is not immortal and the real check on authority must come in the constitutional and political realms that are involved in constitution-making. In this sense, de Gaulle's legalism finds its justification.

A third lesson concerns the use of ambiguity and silence in politics. American mythology lays great stress on frequent and fearless off-the-cuff expressions of policy and doctrine by its public officials. From dog-catcher to chief executive, leaders are expected to speak their mind on the issues, from the trivial to the momentous. Since coming to power, the General has walked the tightrope between army and civilians, right and left, Paris and Algiers. Without a political party to support him, except for crucial allies like Guy Mollet, he has had to pick the time and place to challenge those who stood in the way of his policies. Thus he has called on the classic weapons of statesmen: discretion, timing, prudence, ambiguity and silence.

Those who find only vagueness and indecision in his words now attest that in deeds de Gaulle has removed the army from politics in Algeria, held an election throughout the "empire" and has taken steps toward an Algerian solution. Of course, these are ordinary, not extraordinary, steps forward. On the larger front it remains to be seen whether he can carry the Constitution or bring about a cessation of fighting with large-scale eco-

nomic aid and reconstruction in Algeria. But as he moves almost imperceptibly toward these goals, the strategic importance of not breaking verbal swords with every foe and of not speaking out without restraint on each and every day-to-day issue becomes clear.

These lessons say nothing about the future of Gaullism in France. Even assuming the best constitutional reform and an "Algerian solution," what is the future of an effective parliamentary opposition in France? Will democratic practices be preserved or will their activity be merely formal? What of the prediction that "freedom of speech and of the press will technically remain intact, but their effective range will be reduced by government pressure and a growing conformism?" How will the Government combine its two contradictory ingredients: nostalgia for France's ancient grandeur and the demand for technical modernization? Are France's dilemmas so inextricably interlinked that Algeria, authority in government and balance of payment problems must all be solved simultaneously—or not at all? Or the more concrete needs—where to find the teachers for the Algerian school system when metropolitan France has a desperate shortage? How to avoid integrating France and Algeria into common inflation? Does Article 16 of the new Constitution, giving vast and ambitious presidential powers, threaten France as another fateful clause in the Weimar Constitution led to Hitler?

If one raises these questions, he does so to point up the issues and events that are probably on the agenda of history. It seems wiser to recognize them now than to bask in the glory of a brave and noble political leader.

## Albert Camus, Political Moralist

WILLIAM F. MAY

THE WRITINGS OF Albert Camus have had a decisive influence on the political convictions of many young Frenchmen. Yet he often sounds like a Christian moralist. In fact there is no better way of moving toward the center of his political convictions than by recognizing their theological dimension.

"The astonishing history evoked here is the history of European pride." With these words Camus introduces his eloquent study of the nineteenth

and twentieth centuries, *The Rebel* (New York: Alfred Knopf, Inc., 1956). Camus writes scathingly "of the horizontal religions of our times," of the attempted deification of man that has plagued contemporary life. In the fashion of the Christian prophet, he pursues the moral pretensions of the French Revolutionaries, the pedantry and hypocrisy of the bourgeois world, the demonia of the fascists and the messianic utopianism of the Marxists. In all these movements, Camus argues, man overreaches himself, pretends to one sort of divinity or another but concludes by justifying the violation of man.

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Further, in a manner reminiscent of the classical theologians, Camus links the cardinal sin of pride with a consequent dishonesty and murder. Every human absolute eventually contradicts itself and does so at terrible expense to the solidarity of the race. In honor of Justice, Law and Order the French Revolutionists unleashed a lawless terror. Although praising the formal virtues of honesty, conscience and the dignity of work, the bourgeois class created social conditions that made the exercise of these virtues impossible. While declaring everything permissible in the name of a glorious Germany, Hitler led this very Germany to an impermissible, inglorious defeat. In deference to a future humanity, the Stalinist commits inhumanities that defer indefinitely the advent of the New Jerusalem. The results in each case are more than contradictions furnished by the turns and twists of events. There is a fundamental moral incoherence at the root of all these movements as they lay an ax to their own principles and split open the race.

### Man, the Victim

Camus' affirmations also have a familiar ring for moralists in Christian circles, especially those concerned with "proximate justice." Against the wild immodesty, contradiction and betrayal of human solidarity that ensues when men absolutize a particular group or future for man, Camus urges a passion for justice that is governed at every point by a sense of limits. He displays the essential double tension: the prophet's zeal for response to the abuse of man's dignity, with distrust for a zeal that denies all restraints upon that response. In every instance, Camus recommends a modesty, honesty and decency in political action that will honor the proximate character of justice; he recommends these persuasively by reflecting the discipline of these virtues in his own writing.

Yet the rejections and affirmations suggested so far are hardly enough to register Camus in the latent Church. Notoriously absent from "the history of European pride" is the sense that it is man who is prideful. Ideologies rather than men appear to do most of the overreaching of limits. Man is treated as the victim rather than the author of the ideologies that have dominated our times. In short, there is little sense of man as sinner. As might be suspected, Camus also shows little sympathy for "realism" in politics—an immediate corollary of the sinfulness of man for so many Christian moralists. He has little patience with those who counsel the use of force on the grounds that the world is not yet redeemed. Camus calls not for realistic ac-

tion in the light of the sinfulness of man but for action on behalf of man as the relatively innocent victim.

### God, the Death-bringer

And yet, admitting these distinctions, why not add a dash of pessimism and a pinch of realism and still recognize in Camus' study of pride a significant contribution to Christian anthropology? This is rather difficult, for at the very core of his whole thinking is the denial of God. Clearly denied in his doctrine of limited political goals is God, the Limiter. Although it is out of fashion amongst some theologians to take such a denial seriously, Camus, at least, asks us to consider it so. The denial of God informs the whole of his political thinking. Ultimately he makes it the basis for his rejection of realism in politics, and he places it at the origin of every virtue and every improvement in the human condition. To sense the weight and breadth of this conviction, it is worth returning again to his understanding of pride.

Christians have interpreted pride as the attempt on the part of the creature to play the Creator. In fact, Augustine once remarked that every sin is a grotesque mimicry of one of the perfections of God. Curiosity imitates God's omniscience; ambition seeks to duplicate God's glory; luxuriousness parodies the abundance of the divine life, etc. In sin, man perversely imitates God's virtues.

Camus also understands pride as the attempt to imitate God. Not his virtues, for God has none. But rather this single encompassing vice—God is a murderer. The proposition is simple and fully horrifying. If God exists and every man dies, God is the death-bringer. He is the one who places every man under the penalty of suffering and death. When all the cant, the prayers and imprecations are done with, this is the truth about God: He is the one who slays, the one who raises buboes in the groins of little children, the one who places all men under the penalty of the destruction of their flesh. Neither cult, nor ecclesiastical apparatus, nor theological ingenuity can obscure this fact. "...the order of the world is shaped by death," (*The Plague*, tr. Stuart Gilbert, London, Hamish Hamilton, 1948, p. 123), which inflicts upon man a never-ending defeat. In the light of this horrible fact, Camus does not summon man to atheism but to blasphemy. To deny God's existence is inaccurate. In a sense, he does exist. God exists as the destroyer. But to say "Hallowed be thy name"? This is unthinkable. In decency, man can only blaspheme the death-bringer, resist and desecrate his name. He is a ghou, a chewer of corpses, against



whom men ought to rebel. For God has transgressed a limit—human life.

Camus urges action then, *not* in the image and similitude of God, but action that bears witness to one's original manhood, a manhood that receives its outline in the original refusal to consent to God and his works.

Pride, on the other hand, is a human work of murder added to the divine work of murder, a human injustice that corresponds to the divine injustice, a transgression of limits.

The chief difference between God and man is that God offers no justification for his behavior—he is silent. But man does. In political life, he offers ideologies which attempt to justify murder. Reactionary ideology justifies unrestrained repression as a means of preserving good order and life. Revolutionary ideology justifies the use of every means—war, duplicity and murder—for the sake of a future human life and order.

Camus opposes both on the grounds of the limit discovered in the original insurrection against death itself. All subsequent established orders and revolutions betray their origins when they resort to murderous means in their own right.

No more than Israel is permitted to forget her covenant with her God, or the Church her covenant in the blood of Christ, is the revolutionist permitted to forget his covenant in the blood that originally prompted his insurrection against death. In organizing itself for the future, a revolution must not forget its origins. Otherwise the revolution obscures its future goals and disfigures its face in the present.

### "A Politics of Witness"

Camus is clearly interested in recovering a form of sanctity in political life founded in a double refusal: the refusal of God and the refusal to be God. His rather spectacular theological criticism is directed to that end. He rejects political realism in both its conservative and revolutionary forms and summons man to a modesty, an honesty and a decency that he believes within the reach of man and certainly within the reach of Western man, as it recovers the best in the European revolutionary tradition. His argument against the pride of the realists concludes in a summons to sanctity.

Sanctity does not refer here to the possession of some moral perfection by hero or community, but rather to a politics of witness: political action that is luminous at every point to its origin. If need be, even the goal must be sacrificed for the sake of this witness.

... revolution must try to act, not in order to come into existence at some future date in the eyes of a world reduced to acquiescence, but in terms of the obscure existence already made manifest in the act of insurrection.

(*The Rebel*, p. 252)

Camus' saints are the revolutionaries of 1905 in Russia, members of the battle organization of the Social Revolutionary Party. These men, above all, were distinguished by a sense of limit. Kaliayev, for example, was willing to assassinate, but not when there were children in the carriage of the victim. Moreover, as testimony to the fact that not even such discriminate murder, strictly speaking, was justified, the revolutionary was prepared to atone with the offering of his own life. Camus, in a bitter note, distinguishes such rebels from the dominant realist tradition in the West by remarking,

Two different species of men. One kills only once and pays with his life. The other justifies thousands of crimes and consents to be rewarded with honors.

(*The Rebel*, p. 173, note 6)

Revolutionaries like Kaliayev, however, have always been criticized by the realists as being nihilistic. They live and die on behalf of an immediate witness, but they are irresponsible toward the future. They are ready to protest momentarily; they are willing to take their Hungarian holiday from tyranny. But soon the ecstasy is over, and they lapse by their ineffectiveness once again into the negative fraternity of the condemned. If one is limited to means that must bear immediate witness to one's origin and end, then there is little hope of success. And when a leader pays little attention to success, he purchases a glorious moment at great cost to his people. Renunciation of all concern with efficacy, in the long run, implies a practical acceptance of the world as run by those who avail themselves of force without restraint.

The whole art of politics depends upon the use of means that to some degree obscure origin and goal. Perhaps in the realm of art it is possible to achieve a work that is luminous in detail, that suggests an utter appropriateness in the use of means, but not so in politics. Unless one is willing to abandon the future, there is need for the use of force, indirection and even disguise in the present.

#### Erratum

In the editorial, "Pius XII," (Nov. 11), the promulgation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception was attributed to the late Pope. This is incorrect; Pius XII had to do only with the Dogma of the Assumption.

Camus does not entirely neglect this argument of the realists against a political ethic of immediate witness. He is not unmindful of the problem of power in politics. His savage attack on capital punishment, for example, is not an attack upon penal systems as such. His novel, *The Plague*, does not disparage the need for public structures of power. In *The Rebel* he shows himself sufficiently sensitive to the problem of political force to cast about for power groups that would furnish the material principle for his own ideas.

### Power: Usage and Justification

However, Camus is outspoken in his criticism of the absolute justification of the use of power. In Western culture absolute justification has been furnished by futurism—Christian and Marxist; therefore, Camus has levelled his guns against both. Conservative Christian futurism urged the acceptance of present abuse in the name of a supernatural tomorrow; Marxist futurism has encouraged revolutionary violence in the service of an earthly tomorrow. In both cases the means are justified absolutely; the present is a mere instrument in the hands of God or the Party. Camus insists that the *present* can never be considered raw material or instrument in relation to the future. Violence may be necessary, but it is never in the strictest sense of the word justified.

Beyond urging this restraint on the use of power, however, Camus also argues that the realists overlook different levels of power and efficacy. Camus suggests that there is an efficacy in sap, as well as in the tornado, that the realists are inclined to overlook. On this point, Camus has more in mind than the Western politician who has discovered that there are moral and spiritual, as well as military, forces and urges their full use. Rather he suggests an altogether different *relation* to power than that of use and manipulation. Here Camus' Mediterranean piety towards nature (and human nature) comes to the fore: Nature cultivated rather than manipulated, enjoyed rather than transformed, attested to rather than detested in the name of a more perfect fulfillment that lies

ahead. When nature and human nature are looked at in this way, different levels of power and efficacy come into view.

Realists and futurists are doubly blind then: blind to suffering as they sacrifice the present to the future, that is, as they treat human nature and its powers like raw material that must be manipulated and transformed; but blind also to the creative possibilities of history itself, as they overlook different levels of efficacy and power.

Camus may be blind in his own way. We may not hold to his argument. We may surely note with some irony that his work has come out of a country in signal need of as much realism in politics as it can lay its hand on. But it is difficult to read Camus without having one's own vision corrected—particularly a tendency to farsightedness that causes one to overlook the evil and the summons to witness that lie near at hand. It is remarkable how easy it is to deal carelessly with the present, to charge off the whole of life to the interim needs of battle without witnessing to the origin of the war, to remain frozen in the present while serving some forgotten future thaw.

The Church militant has always recognized a danger in the Franciscan spirit. This journal was founded in concern with that danger. No doubt there is an even greater danger of Franciscanism in politics. But, no less than the Church, the political order is in trouble if there is no one around to insist on an immediate witness.

## CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

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### CONTENTS

LESSONS FROM DE GAULLE'S FRANCE  
KENNETH W. THOMPSON  
ALBERT CAMUS, POLITICAL MORALIST  
WILLIAM F. MAY

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